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U.S. Department of the Interior

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## National Park Service News Release

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### **Interior Secretary Norton Recognizes NPS Volunteer Anastacia Hernando During "Take Pride in America" Program**

(Washington) -- Anastacia Hernando of Salem, Massachusetts received special recognition today from Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton during the unveiling of the new and revitalized "Take Pride in America" Campaign at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

For over 18 years, Anastacia or "Annie" as she is known to National Park Service staff, volunteered more than 17,000 hours at Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Massachusetts, keeping the building interiors and outside exhibits clean, and the outside areas free of debris.

Anastacia came to the United States from her native Philippines in 1983. Her oldest son Ben and daughter Concepcion had immigrated to this country ten years earlier, and had been urging their mother to join them. Anastacia was reluctant to leave the Philippines due to her late husband's failing health.

Shortly after arriving in this country, Anastacia became a volunteer at Salem Maritime National Historic Site, through the local AARP Community Services Program. She was so determined to become a volunteer and wanted the job of cleaning the Custom House and other National Park Service property so much, that she dyed her cropped silver hair jet black, and climbed up on the window ledge to prove she could handle any job.

She also was so excited to finally be in the United States that within six years, at the age of 68, she became a U.S. citizen. Anastacia worked very hard learning U.S. history with the help of her tutor, NPS interpreter Sheila Cooke-Kayser and other Salem Maritime NHS staff.

Anastacia continued to work 20 hours per week until 2002 when eye surgery required her to take a short "leave of absence." Now well into her 80's, Anastacia is anxious to return to her job at Salem Maritime.

"By working with fellow volunteers, young and old, we lend our hands to heal our land, one acre at a time. And in so doing, we are celebrating the start of the national, grassroots, bipartisan Take Pride in America program," Secretary Norton said at the National Press Club address. "Take Pride In America will empower volunteers from every corner of America to restore and improve our parks, refuges, recreation areas and cultural and historical sites. The program inspires citizen stewardship through a bold and innovative public communication campaign. Outstanding volunteer efforts are rewarded with presidential recognition."

Modeled after the highly visible and successful national cleanup endeavor initiated by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, the new Take Pride In America campaign will become part of President George W. Bush's Freedom Corps.

With the announcement of the new Take Pride In America program, the Interior Department launched a special Take Pride web site -- [www.TakePride.gov](http://www.TakePride.gov) -- that outlines program goals and offers ideas and suggestion for citizen, group and corporate involvement. Interior will serve as the lead federal department and will enlist the cooperation and commitment of all agencies in the federal government.

The National Park Service, an Interior Department agency, manages the National Park System, which comprises 388 areas covering more than 84 million acres, for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. Through a variety of programs, the NPS cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resources conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Salem Maritime National Historic Site was the country's first National Historic Site. Positioned along the harbor in Salem, Massachusetts, it remains the best representation of early American maritime activities and their significant contributions to the founding and development of the United States. Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Massachusetts, includes three 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century wharves, the Custom House and Bonded Warehouse; West India Goods Store and St. Joseph Hall on Derby Street; the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Narbonne house, and the home of 18<sup>th</sup>-century merchant E. H. Derby. The historic structures along with the recent addition of the sailing vessel Friendship, remain exceptional reminders of the time when Salem wealth and Salem vessels traded in the East Indies and throughout the world.

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